

Comments for water plan

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To: DWR CWP Comments <cwpcom@water.ca.gov>;

First of all, I would like to thank and commend the Department of Water Resources for the extra efforts made to create an inclusive updated water plan, which recognizes the need for outreach to historically overlooked communities such as Tribes. Since time immemorial Tribes have had a holistic relationship with the waters in this region, instead of a commodity with an economic value Tribes realize that water is life. There are many approaches to “water management”, and the water plan for the most part presents well thought out scenarios. However, the one aspect that is most concerning is the water allocated for agriculture. At 30.5% of the water used in the state, it’s time to take a realistic look at industrial agriculture.

This is a complicated issue, of course we want to grow enough food for the people, of course we want to support local farmers. But, the irony is that on the one hand we are growing so much food that one of the largest percentage of solid waste going to landfills is now food, we are pumping the groundwater dry to produce food that is thrown away, or shipped around the world, subsidized by tax payer money. Before droughts, population growth, water diversions and over pumping of ground water this wasn’t much of an issue. But times have changed, and it’s time for industrial agriculture to change with the times. There are many new technologies for agriculture, many drought tolerant varieties, dry farming techniques, inter-city aquaponics, the old industrial agriculture model of millions of acres of field crops doesn’t fit the “new normal”. Just as coal mining needs to make way for cleaner energy, industrial agriculture needs to embrace new technology as well. Outreach to farmers to teach drought tolerant crops, partnering with Universities to develop more dry-farming programs, developing a water wise branding similar to organic branding, supporting more inter-city aquaponics start-ups, educating farmers, consumers, and water managers are all critical to changing the agriculture system. Not only do we have to look at carbon sequestering in soil, we must also look at banking water in the soil. Every time a crop is grown and shipped away there is a net loss in the watershed, with a huge cumulative impact. Hopefully, the 2018 Water Plan will reflect this, and create programs to begin the era of water wise agriculture practices.

Thank you,

Respectfully,

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